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there is genuine advancement of civilization.

Imagery is the clue to conduct. Without mental imagery there can be no development of character. Without mental imagery there can be no social progress. This mental imagery comes from the experience of life. You are not the sole purveyors of it. Books, as I have said, are dead and inert things until men with some experience of life come to them for further insight and for guidance as they go their way trying to understand life and to interpret it more truly and to get out of it greater richness.

There is a delight in mental pictures. May our pictures be interesting and true and ennobling, may they increase in number as the years go on, may they open up to us vistas of personal satisfaction, give us keener insight into the meaning of life and stir us to larger loyalties and to truer service. May we pledge ourselves to this great work and to the furthering and fostering of those things which Watson has so finely called "the things that are more excellent."

"The grace of friendship, mind and heart

Linked with their fellow heart and mind,  
The gains of science, gifts of art,

The sense of oneness with our kind,  
The thirst to know and understand,

A large and liberal discontent,  
These are the goods in life's rich hand,  
The things that are more excellent."

At the conclusion of President Vincent's address, Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee announced that M. Amedee Tremblay, organist of the Basilica, would accompany a number of Canadian folk songs which M. Normandin, of Montreal, would sing. They were given in three groups of three, and between each group was given one of Dr. Drummond's poems in character, by Mr. Heney, of Ottawa, a most excellent interpreter of these sketches of the French-Canadian habitant.

These unique, interesting and well rendered contributions to the exercises of the evening were much appreciated by all present, and at their conclusion the

session closed with a brief but hearty expression of acknowledgment from President Elmendorf.

## SIXTH GENERAL SESSION

(Russell Theatre, Tuesday, July 2,  
3 p. m.)

President Elmendorf occupied the chair.

Mr. CARR: Many of us appreciate the work done in days past by Frederick W. Faxon, in personally conducting our post-conference tours. Business obliged him to take another course this year and cross the water. It has been suggested that we send him a wireless despatch of appreciation and felicitation in the name of the association. Madam President, I move the authorization of such a telegram.

The motion was carried unanimously, and the cablegram ordered sent.

The PRESIDENT: Now, we will proceed with the regular program, which brings us to the last of our series growing out of the idea of service to the individual, and we shall take pleasure in hearing Mr. CARL B. RODEN, assistant librarian, Chicago public library, on

## BOOK ADVERTISING: INFORMATION AS TO SUBJECT AND SCOPE OF BOOKS

At my first A. L. A. conference, that of Waukesha, now eleven years ago, I heard discussed that topic ever fruitful of discussion: the librarian's attitude toward those books which are technically known as 'off-color.' The indignant resentment of that part of the public which failed to appreciate the censorious solicitude of the librarian was vividly set forth, and there were those who felt that the only permanent way out was, in the words of George Ade, to "give the public what it thinks it wants." But the Librarian of Congress, in defending the library's point of view, uttered a remark which, as his remarks have a habit of doing, clarified the atmosphere as a Chicago lake breeze lifts a fog, and we settled back again

serene in the knowledge that our orthodoxy had once more been vindicated and set upon its firm foundations.

He said, in effect, that the duty of the librarian was not exclusion but selection and that in the full consciousness of his responsibility to the entire community he, the librarian, must exercise fully and freely his prerogative of selecting, out of the multitude of books, those which best suited his purpose and served his ends.

The phrase "not exclusion but selection" struck at least one in that audience as so clear and telling a characterization of the librarian's business that he has kept it in mind, and well within reach for instant use, ever since. Many times it has served to confound the irate patron who combatively insisted that he was old enough to judge for himself what was good for him. Not a few times has it been the stone offered the facetious newspaper man who came seeking for bread in the form of a "story" on the "barring out" of the latest shady novel. Today it recurs again as a fitting text upon which to base a plea for the more effective advertising of books as to subject and scope, and I trust that my exegesis may not prove too violent to establish the relation between my text and my topic, which to my mind is close and intimate.

A library, of the kind with which we are now concerned, is first of all—and after all—a collection of books, selected and assembled by the librarian. It may be so administered as to become a great civic force, a social instrument, an educational agency, but first of all it is a collection of units, brought together upon certain principles as they operate in the mind of the library's administrator. Now, the word "administer" is a transitive verb, one definition of which is: "to manage, to conduct, as in public affairs," and another, "to serve, to dispense, as in medicine." We may so administer—manage, conduct—the library as to render it a power for the advancement of humanity, and when we do that we are responding to the impulse which is generated in the very air

which we in this age of advancement breathe.

Or we may administer—serve, dispense—the books, as in medicine; knowing the powers and the virtues of each; perceiving the stimulating effects of one, the acceleration of heart action induced by another; this one as an emollient and an anodyne, that one as a vesicatory or an excitant; here a bromide, there a sulphite, yonder a tincture blandly dissolved in a vehicle of simple syrup, next a pill, sugar-coated, but none the less a stern and bitter dose. And when we do that we are returning to the habits and practices of that "old librarian" so useful to use now as a horrible example and a subject for humorous divagation, but we are also returning to the faith once delivered to the saints, for after all, the Fathers believed with Lord Bacon that "some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested" and they did love to administer them "as in medicine."

It is far from my intention to imply that the new librarian does not know his books. Certainly he has not surrendered one ounce of his faith in their potency. Rather does he impute to them, collectively, greater powers than ever before, regarding his library as a moral unit of large influence and seeking to extend its operation to the uttermost limits of his jurisdiction. But is it not thus collectively that he prefers to regard and administer it; as a great, powerful moral force which shall permeate the community and envelop it so that, by a sort of intellectual pantheism, we may all be in tune with the Infinite if we but open the windows of the soul? Is he not being borne along in the modern trend in therapeutics which is replacing doses and cordials, tinctures and bitter pills with a state of mind?

Creating the library habit by such methods: by putting the library in the way of the public and making it a familiar and consuetudinal part of the environment; pervading the civic fabric and injecting itself into the daily life of the citizen, is one

thing. It is a very great and glorious thing. To the multitude it has opened new channels of relaxation, of stimulation, of mental growth and moral adjustment. Its possibilities have not been overstated even by the librarian himself. And on the day when librarians discovered the means and perfected the methods which set the library in that commanding and strategic position, on that day they set themselves in their rightful place as public educators and added a powerful impulse to that divine momentum by which humanity is being driven forward toward the goal of perfection which must be its destiny. But creating the reading habit—well, is that quite the same thing? And if it be not quite the same thing, are librarians still concerned as much as formerly with promoting the generation of the reading habit as a part—say the lesser half—of their task? And if librarians are so concerned, are they—are we—using the most effective methods to advance that part of our task? And is advertising the library just the same thing as advertising the books? It is by the consideration of these questions that I hope to expound my text and deal with the topic assigned to me..

The library habit is akin to the museum habit, the public conservatory habit and the menagerie habit, and differs from the reading habit as visits to these institutions differ from cultivating your own garden patch or rearing your own pets. Perhaps the logical conclusion of these comparisons would seem to be that one must own one's books, but happily one does not have to own a book's body in order to possess its soul. Our present library machinery is admirably adapted to the nurture of the library habit. Open shelves, book display racks, branches in which all visible barriers and restrictions have become as obsolete as the "keep off the grass" signs in the parks, all these invite the promiscuous and profuse handling of books, the sipping and skipping, the skimming and returning for more. Our card catalogs with their stern non-committalness and deadly monotony make

it necessary for the reference patron to call for whole armfuls of books which he fumbles hastily, scouring the index and tables of contents, and laying them aside for the next dip into the grab bag. Our monthly bulletins, presenting in serried ranks the accessions of the month, severely marshalled by the rules of the decimal classification, and with one title closely followed by the next, so that the roaming eye is constantly caught by new and ever more attractive possibilities for skipping and skimming—what could be devised more effectively to promote that species of gluttony which is indicated by long lists of call numbers of books which we simply must see before next month's bulletin appears with another long list? All these things conduce to high circulation statistics and are therefore grateful to our senses. But how many of them are calculated to impart the reading habit, are effective in instilling "much love and some knowledge of books" as a distinguished librarian has paraphrased it in a recent lecture? How far does any of this machinery go in advertising books as to their subject and scope, as the program has it?

The science of advertising claims a psychological basis all its own. Perhaps it is no psychology at all but only a functioning of instinct that causes us to respond, and often capitulate in the end, to the ceaseless reiteration and ever-present insistence upon a given assertion. But whatever it is, it reacts upon the volition in so compelling a manner as to justify, even in the final acid test of the cash book, the enormous outlay of money poured forth in arousing it. And the keynote of it all is, not the fact of the reiteration, though that is important, but the overpowering irresistible confidence with which the assertion is put forth. The advertiser who would go before his public with the guarded statement that "our soap seems to be a very good soap and barring certain blemishes, a very desirable article," or would quote somebody's else testimonials (a practice now employed only by those Ishmaelites of commerce,

the patent medicines) might spread his placards in a solid wall across the country, with no other result than that of obliterating the landscape which now he only makes hideous. Yet I ask whether the foregoing does not fairly represent the general style of book annotations in library publications, when we treat ourselves to the luxury of annotations at all?

Yet the business man and the librarian both need publicity, and that which each should secure varies from the other only in degree, not in kind nor in the object primarily to be attained by it, namely, the patronage of the public. The merchant seeks this patronage for his own ends of private gain; the librarian, for ends which he knows to be of higher value and of greater consequence to the life of the community. The former offers for sale an article which he has manufactured or purchased, and to the use of which he sets out to convert the public by methods which have been found effective, though they are expensive. The latter buys his goods, not, let us hope, with quite the same purpose of securing only such as are likely to appeal to the passing fancy of his constituency. His aim being higher than the mere gratification of tastes and desires, he applies higher standards to his purchases. His business is selection. Every book that he adds to the library he first selects out of all that are offered, and each selection is fortified and backed by his deliberate judgment that that particular book will be a good one for his public. He knows why it is so, and now it becomes his business to convince his patrons that it is so, and to induce them to profit by the selection which he has made. How does he go about it?

His task is both easier and more difficult than that of the merchant. Easier, because he asks nothing more intrinsically valuable than time and thought; more difficult, because to most people the use of a book is not yet so proximate a need as a safety razor or even a cake of soap. In common with the merchant he is striving to secure that indispensable ele-

ment upon which every human transaction between two parties must rest, namely, the confidence of those with whom he seeks to deal: confidence in his motives, in his judgment, and in the value of the service which he offers to perform. And while the merchant constantly faces the danger of losing the faith of the public through the easily aroused distrust of the value of that which he offers, the librarian finds even greater difficulty in overcoming the fear that his design is the philanthropic one of uplifting and improving their mental condition instead of merely amusing them. While the one must combat the lurking suspicion of his customers that he may be "doing" them, the other must dissimulate lest he be discovered in the act of "doing them good."

Each, then, is under the same necessity of securing the attention of the public, and ultimately for the same end: that of ensuring the prosperity and consistent growth of his enterprise. We know how the merchant advertises. Now, how does the librarian advertise? By means of catalogs, bulletins, reading lists, occasionally by space in the newspapers, when that can be had free. Very good means, these,—for advertising the library; for implanting the library habit. But very poor and weak means, indeed, for advertising the books or instilling the reading habit. Books are not advertised in library publications, except incidentally, for you cannot advertise a book merely by mentioning its name, or copying its title page.

In his spacious and optimistic way the librarian, when speaking *ex cathedra*, in library publications, vests himself, without intending to, in a sort of cloak of infallibility as unbecoming as it is unnatural, saying: "Behold, I bring you the books of the month; they are good books or they would not be here. That is enough for you to know. I have spoken!" And yet he has at his command twice over the chief essential ingredient of all good advertising, namely, confidence. Confidence in the righteousness of his mission and confidence in the merit and integrity of his book

selection, and in the conscientious methods employed in making it. Why does he not try to do a little of that which the merchant spends millions in trying to do—transmit that confidence to his patron? Why, when his business is book selection, and he knows he prosecutes it faithfully, is he so afraid of being caught at it?

The monthly bulletins of our public libraries, with a few shining exceptions, are bare and bald author and title lists employing that deadliest of all monotonous forms, the catalog entry. Now, I have been too long apprenticed to the trade of the cataloger to find it in my heart to cavil at his art and the carefully evolved, scientifically derived principles upon which it rests. But when the cataloger is "a-cataloging" he is not writing advertising copy. He is making a permanent record, and he is following certain rules which long experience has established and vindicated as good and necessary for that purpose. He finds it necessary to establish, beyond the possibility of confusion, the absolute identity of an author, and he does this by giving that author his full and correct name, stripping him of all disguises and never heeding the fact that the author himself may have been trying through all his years of discretion to live down the indiscretions of his baptismal record. This practice of employing full names in a card catalog can still be defended, though with much labor. But when an author is made to appear thus full-panoplied in a monthly bulletin, which should have the freshness and attractiveness of a news-sheet—which is all it is—he is more often disguised and concealed from, than revealed to, the view of him who is expected to read as he runs. Again, the cataloger rightly confines himself to rendering an accurate transcript of the title page, neither adding thereto, nor, if he be wise, subtracting one jot or tittle therefrom. But title pages, like human faces, are often but a poor index to character, and many a book which might upon closer acquaintance prove a very good friend indeed, if only some one had been near to speak the few formal words of in-

troduction required in good society, is passed by because of a forbidding and austere, or otherwise misleading, countenance. And so the monthly record becomes a stern and monotonous affair, requiring to be furbished up and trimmed with all sorts of side issues by way of supplying what the city editor calls human interest, all of them well contrived to advertise the library, but using up the space which should be given over to advertising the books—of which, first of all, and after all the library is composed.

Mr. Dana, in his pamphlet on booklists, makes a statement, from the experience of his own library, but which must have found an echo in many a heart, to the effect that the monthly list did not supply any definite demand and was very little used. Exactly! So might a monthly list of additions to the city directory be very little used; so does the periodical revision of the telephone directory supply a definite demand only to those who are looking for something—and the average citizen is spending very little of his time looking for books. They must be shown to him, and then he must be shown why it will be to his advantage, pleasurable or profitable, to make their closer acquaintance.

Open shelf rooms, or, wanting these, display racks and tables are in themselves a mighty stride forward in shortening the distance between the reader and the books. But do they always go the whole distance? Is it enough to turn a man loose in a roomful of books, all beckoning to him and standing in rows expectant to be chosen, like children in a game? They cannot speak, the attendants, gracious and hospitable and expert though they be, cannot speak to everyone. They often have enough to do to give attention to those that have the courage to speak to them. But placards could speak. Small groups of books, taken out of their tactical formation on the shelves and brought together because of some bond of common interest not always convertible in terms of the decimal classification, could become elo-

quent. And eloquent, indeed, and welcome to the dazed explorer of unfamiliar precincts, would be a bulletin, many of them, plenty of them—for a belief in signs of the right sort is a mark of wisdom—which would tell him in an authoritative, confident, and confidential way what he wishes to know, namely, something about the books, or only about a few of them, that surround him. We do these things, sometimes, on rare occasions, on special days, by means of special bulletins. But it is mostly in the children's room. In fact we take great pains that the children should receive the benefit of our expert judgment and ministrations. But to their elders, to most of whom we might well apply a reverent adaptation of the words of the precept, beginning: "Except ye become as a little child . . . ," to their elders we pay the subtle and misdirected compliment of assuming that they know as much as we do about what is, after all, our chief business, the selection and proper employment and enjoyment of books.

It begins to appear, then, I hope, that what I am driving at is that the way to convey information as to subject and scope of books is to talk about them, and to talk about them in such a way as to transmit not only the information, but our own interest in them, our confidence in them, and our point of view—which is not different from that of the people we seek to serve, though it may be more clearly defined when it comes to books. We are all human beings together and our chief common interest is human interest. When we can establish that bond between ourselves and those whom we desire to reach the task is done.

Why is it that the Chicago Evening Post, three weeks ago today, devoted 500 words in its editorial columns to comment upon the shelf of classics and the illuminating explanatory legend accompanying it, in the Springfield, Mass., library? Why is it that when we receive the St. Louis bulletin, we turn first to the page of "Books I like and why I like them?" Why do the

pleasant little informal chats in the Chicago book bulletin about the troubles of the reference department meet with so wide a response? Why is Mr. Wellman's charming booklet about "Some modern verse" still kept in every librarian's little private file of things really worth keeping? Because in all of these, in one form or another, there appears the common bond of sympathy, the common note of human nature, which finds its complement wherever nature is human; the common ground of interest in the self-revelation of human beings which these little isolated and intrinsically unimportant enterprises bring to light. The book bulletin that would report upon the books of the month in the same pleasant, informal fashion, that would embody a page or two of book-chat in the same style of sprightly, intimate, personal causerie, think you that such a book bulletin would stand in great danger of being suspended because "it was very little used?"

Let us, then, talk more about our books: by word of mouth, in print, by placards, by whatever means ideas may be conveyed, so that the means be effective and the ideas—our own! When we annotate, and so breathe the breath of life into the dry bones of a catalog entry, let us honestly assume responsibility for the presence of the books in the list, by giving our own appraisal, and not always by quoting from some organ of orthodoxy whose very name connotes oppressive solemnity to the man in the street. We have our own collective opinion ready made for us every month in the A. L. A. Booklist, concisely put, simply worded, and the result of the combined judgment of a body of collaborators of the highest respectability. But this we mostly keep to ourselves, as a sort of trade secret, instead of giving the public at large the benefit of this most admirable product of co-operative skill.

And let us do these things not by way of pretending to oracular gifts or the possession of omniscience, but as a means of revealing ourselves and so of establishing a channel of communication between our-

selves and our people through which the clear stream of human nature, which is common to us all, may flow unobstructed. And upon that stream we may confidently launch our several ships, freighted with wisdom and joy, profit and pleasure, inspiration and growth and life itself, safe in the knowledge that they will be wafted straight down the stream to their destinations, the hearts and minds of our patrons.

Perhaps this is one of the things in the mind of the president when she laid down the following query as the point of departure for this week's program: "Should not the library, neglecting no other known service, make very certain that it fulfills its own unique task, that is, to provide and to make known the sources of joy?"

**THE PRESIDENT:** I think it is quite evident from several references in Mr. Roden's very delightful paper why the president went to Springfield for a paper on making known the charm of books. The librarian at Springfield was by "royal command" compelled either to write a paper himself or produce some one who could write it, and Mr. Wellman has produced Miss Grace Miller's manuscript, which he will read to us.

**MR. WELLMAN:** Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very sorry that Miss Miller could not be here to present her paper in person. She is known to some of you through the notes which she writes for the Springfield Bulletin.

Mr. Wellman read the following paper, prepared by Miss GRACE MILLER, of the Springfield city library.

#### **BOOK ADVERTISING: ILLUMINATION AS TO ATTRACTIONS OF REAL BOOKS**

The reputation of the American people as a nation of readers evokes a pleasurable sensation of pride in the patriotic heart. But when we pause to ask, "What do they read?" that pride is destined to fall. Newspapers, periodicals, novels, the popular books of the hour—yes, but how many of the books of all time? It may be doubted if the present generation, with

all its opportunities, reads as many of these as did its fathers.

Two traits seem forcibly to impress the cultivated foreigner as characteristic of our men and, to a lesser degree, of our women—a hard materialism and a lack of interest in the finer things of life. Is there any relation between this dearth of idealism and the reading habits of the nation? Ideals are the greatest force in life, and what a man's ideals are is largely determined by what he reads. The power of great literature to awaken noble ambitions, to cultivate the imagination, to impart the ability "to see life steadily and see it whole" is undisputed. In face of all this, where does the library of to-day stand?

It has been pointed out that the modern library movement is of recent growth. We look with amazement at all that has been accomplished in the last quarter-century. There seems little to connect the library of the present with the library of the past. But one link remains—the book. Sometimes it seems as if that was the one thing we were leaving out of our thought—the book, not as a material object, paper, printing, binding, to all of which we pay much attention, but the book as literature. Is the library, too, becoming materialized? As the authorized custodians of the wisdom of the past, we stand in an important and dignified relation to the present. How can we share our treasures with a public that too often fails to appreciate its need for them?

First of all—above all mere schemes and devices however good—must come a real love and enthusiasm for books, and a knowledge of them among library workers. It is impossible to awaken an interest in other people in a subject in which you are not interested yourself. There has been more or less good-natured railery among librarians over that time-honored recommendation for one who wishes to enter library work, that he is "fond of reading." In the long list of qualifications which, we are told, the library assistant should possess—a list so compre-